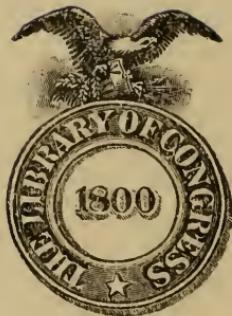


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LYRICS
By LAURA BLACKBURN





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The Little Bookfellow Series

Lyrics

Lyrics

By

Laura Blackburn

"



CHICAGO
THE BOOKFELLOWS
1920

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been printed in the month of October, 1920*

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THE TORCH PRESS
CEDAR RAPIDS
IOWA

To
BERT LESTON TAYLOR

LYRICS

I

EXULTATION

Now violets are seen
 Along the river marge,
While, further up the green
 Bank, the bright golden targe
Of the brave dandelion gleams
In the pure beams
Of the earth-quicken^g sun:
Life its great war has won!

High in a budding tree,
 A herald robin sings
 “Victory! Victory!”
With reawakened bliss,
As from a chrysalis,
 My spirit frees her wings
And tears her bonds apart;
The while, within my heart,
 Beauty and Melody,
Dancing with nimble feet,
His jubilant song repeat:
 “Victory! Victory!”

II

IMMUTABILITY

A thousand years from now
The grass will be as green,
The bloom upon the bough
In all its pride be seen,
The robin's note be clear
As that which now we hear;
Life then will make its home
Sweeter than honeycomb.

'Tis happiness to feel
That we have seen and heard
Wonders that do reveal
Nature's most holy word:
'Tis ecstasy to know
That in their ebb and flow
The years, impartial, bless
All hearts with loveliness.

III

I blew a kiss to Chloe,
She blew it back to me—
Across her bosom snowy,
A breath from Araby!

Then suddenly I caught her
And kissed her lips and brow—
The sailor's rosy daughter
That keeps my kisses now!

IV

TO ARTEMIS

Lovely huntress, thee I follow
Over hill and through the meads,
Through the forest, down the hollow —
Wheresoe'er thy fancy leads.

When thy bow of silver brightens,
When the star of even gleams,
How the shadowed spirit lightens,
Filled with glamour of thy beams.

Cities vanish: dome and palace
Sink into the whelming sea;
While thy lily's golden chalice
Brims with nectar, poured for me.

Eagerly I quaff the measure,
Toss aside the shining cup;
Lo, before us every treasure
Of the quarry startles up!

Far adown the ways of wonder
Hounds of magic lead the chase,
Till the Morning's distant thunder
Mutters, frowning on our race.

Still, within the paths of duty
Flash the feet of Artemis!
He who loves and worships beauty —
All her starry dreams are his!

V

A castle that fronts the sea,
With flags that kiss the sky —
'Tis only a picture fair;
I gaze and pass it by.

A valley afar for me,
A cottage small and white,
Yea, only a room abloom
With love and candlelight!

VI

THE FLIGHT

With lavender and rosemary
I made my chamber sweet,
And many a fruit from vine and tree
I plucked for Love to eat;
A wine so rare I poured for him
It seemed the soul of flowers;
But long within my chamber dim
It only charmed the hours.

Love came at last — a sorry wight,
A prodigal indeed,
Within his eyes a shadowed light
That made my bosom bleed.
I wept; I fled and left him there,
And still from him I flee —
How clean, how leal is lavender,
How sweet is rosemary!

VII

Now many a bird
Awakens the morn,
Where lately was heard
But ravens forlorn.

Now Hope in the breast,
Whence frightened it flew,
Is building its nest
And singing to you.

Oh hearken, my dear,
Oh hearken, my sweet,
The heart o' the year
Is under your feet!

VIII

You love the minor strain?
Beloved, so do I;
The old ancestral pain
Within us cannot die.

Still let us, dear, rejoice,
And weep but when we must;
The soul's bright wings, through choice,
Should never trail in dust!

IX

As I went down to Alstead,
At midnight's quiet hour,
The moon, low down in heaven,
Was like a lonely flower;
The apple-trees, in blossom —
Like spectral forms they seemed;
I fancied them the spirits
Of dreams that I had dreamed.

As I came back from Alstead,
Along the selfsame way,
The sun, high up in heaven,
Spake not of yesterday;
The merry, merry blossoms,
A-twinkle in the wind,
Seemed like the wings of fairies,
Or dreams within the mind.

X

When April to the world returns,
The soul expands her wings,
And where the flaming tulip burns
She hovers and she sings;
But when unto the happy air
The lilac shows its face —
She folds her questing pinions there
And will not leave the place.

XI

To-day I heard a meadowlark
His melody outpour;
My soul put off her raiment dark
And spread her wings to soar.

Full twenty years bade me adieu,
Nor gave a reason why —
Go hear the meadowlarks if you
Would be as young as I.

XII

Up, get you up and come
Into the fields where hum
The golden bees, and sing
The sweet sweet birds of spring.

Up, get you up, my love,
To see upon the dove
His newly burnished breast
Against the bright sun pressed.

Up, get you up before
The blossoms at the door
Have lost their freshening dew —
The morn lacks only you !

XIII

With Poverty, I, laughing, sang
Bright songs of golden cheer;
With Luxury I muse, and sigh
For many a vanished year.

Thou merry, merry barefoot maid,
Could I but kiss thy brow,
This dull enchantress of the soul
Were not my sorrow now.

XIV

Down the road to Annie,
Up the road to May —
Whither, whither shall I hasten?
Waken, love, and say.

Annie's eyes are starry
As woodland tarns at night;
The eyes of May are fountains
Of ever-dancing light.

Down the road to Annie,
Up the road to May —
Whither, whither shall I hasten?
Love is blind to-day.

XV

THE LETTER

By one small glowworm's light,
I saw a fairy write
Upon a rose's leaf
A message sweet and brief.
No sooner was he done
Than winds came by, and one
The petal took, and dropped it
Just where a lily stopped it.
And so I know full well
Where that bright fay doth dwell
To whom the fairy sends
His love ; but since we're friends,
I do not choose to tell,
For fear I break the spell.

XVI

COMRADES

I asked from Life a sign
To prove himself divine ;
Behold, the while I spoke,
An evening primrose woke,
And through the purple sky
A homing bird went by,
And out a planet shone —
And Life and I walked on
Into the silent night
As two old cronies might.

XVII

NOCTURNE

1

The sweet day sinks into repose,
 The hour is pensive, dusk descends ;
The flowers their weary eyelids close,
 The song of many a robin ends ;
The sward with gracious dew is wet,
 The twilight star in purple glows —
In lavender and violet,
 Dream thou until the darkness goes !

2

Moonlight ; silence ; unclouded skies ;
 Fragrance from unseen flowers ; fireflies ;
One cricket heard ; no leaf astir —
 And lo, a loving worshiper !
For all the beauty felt and seen,
 Within her temple, Thought, serene,
In adoration, humbly prays
 The incense on her altar blaze !

3

Like some bowed crone that dreams of times
 Forever gone, and, weak of sight,
Forlorn, plods home, the old moon climbs
 The shadow-haunted range of night,
Musing of those imperial hours
 When she was huntress, young and strong :
When Hesper glowed, and all the bowers
 Of Hellas woke to joyful song !

XVIII

THE PASSION FLOWER

Thou lowly, meek and lovely flower,
But yesterday, at evening's hour,
As trudged I upward with my load,
I saw thee blooming by the road,
And stayed my steps to wonder there
That beauty so supremely fair
Should waste its loveliness on me —
Even as the Flower of Calvary !

XIX

REGENERATION

Favonius, young, warm-hearted god,
Hither is lightly tripping now.
See where with flowers he decks the sod !
See where with bloom he stars the bough !

Here will I muse, and let his breath
Quicken my winter-wearied blood —
Until my barren thoughts of death,
Even as these naked branches, bud !

XX

JUNE

Like nectar in a crystal bowl
Are these June days unto my soul ;
My heart, born tongueless, beating high
With joy, just hesitates to fly !

XXI

My heart — my heart's a gypsy
That revels, hour by hour,
To spend a wondrous dower ;
For June has made me tipsy
And holds me in her power.

How well I love to tarry
Where spreads her leafy bower !
For June, June, June's the fairy
That I would like to marry,
And live within a flower !

XXII

Lost am I in ways of beauty,
Lost, and do not care :
Lost, my starry duty
Just to sing the sweet and fair.

One with bird and bough and blossom,
What is Fame to me ?
I — I fill my bosom,
Fill my soul, O Love, with thee !

XXIII

The rose is a royal lady
That loves the lordly sun;
The violet haunts the shady
Cool cloisters of the nun.

I would not wed with roses,
And nuns they never wed;
I love the country posies
Where I was born and bred!

I love the gorse and heather,
And bluebells close beside—
I'll find my cap a feather,
And kiss a Highland bride!

XXIV

The star that shines at eve so bright,
At morn no eye may see;
Yet who shall say another night
It shall not gleam for thee?

This heart that lies in death so still—
Where hides the soul it bore?
Its orbit surely it must fill—
Lo, morning's at the door!

XXV

ENOUGH

The grass creeps everywhere,
But only here and there
 A rose looks up;
The gods are kind indeed;
The draught we mostly need
 Is in our cup.

XXVI

A catbird in the lilac bush,
 A robin in the tree—
Their hearts are full of happiness,
 Their throats of melody.

At morning and at eventide
 Their songs are like to wine;
But oh, my soul, to slay thy dole,
 A humble song is thine.

The little wren that sings all day,
 He laughs at skies forlorn;
 He builds within a thorn!
He twitters here, he twitters there,
 “I’m glad that I was born!”

XXVII

You sang to me, one distant day,
“Over the hills and far away,”
A sad sweet song that still I hear,
After how many a vanished year.

I pray you sing once more to me,
No song to set the spirit free,
But one to cheer the weary heart,
After the soul has played its part.

Sing me a song that tells of rest,
For love at last has found its nest;
Sing me the song of happy men:
Over the hills and home again.

XXVIII

Many a joy can wing the heart
 Beyond the desert of despair,
Many a joy the dark boughs part
 And show a golden apple there;
But sweeter joy I cannot name
 Than when the heart is wintry sore,
To hear the voice of love exclaim:
 “There’s a rose, a rose at the door!”

XXIX

You little heart-shaped leaves
That flutter in the sun,
The nimble fancy weaves
A soul for every one.

The hearts we deem but mold —
Their spirits dance on high ;
Reclothed in youth, they hold
Bright revel in the sky.

While plays the piper Wind,
Dance on, and fade and fall ;
In your delight we find
Felicity for all.

XXX

AN EARLY FLOWER

Behold how beautiful, how sweet
This gentle floweret at my feet ;
Surely, to bless the barren sod,
Before me must have journeyed God !
Even as the star the Magi saw,
Hither I felt its glory draw
My soul ; and if I fail to find
Its mangered Light, I'm blind, I'm blind !

XXXI

Beholding thee, I thought
Of lilies tall and white ;
But when I saw thy lips,
Roses were my delight.

Deep, deep into thine eyes
I looked, and since that hour —
To me the violet
Has been a holy flower !

XXXII

INNER LIGHT

There is a light within the mind
That far transcends the noon tide ray,
And in its glory oft we find
The hopes, the dreams of yesterday ;
For lo ! they live contented there,
As young and beautiful as when
Youth blew its bubbles into air
And laughed at all the ways of men.

XXXIII

Just now, across my pillow drifted
The briny scent of far-off seas —
Or was it Memory's veil that lifted
And showed the stormy Hebrides ?

XXXIV

THE POET

He reaps the world, as men reap fields of wheat ;
Sorrow and pain and joy to him belong ;
He gathers much of bitter and of sweet,
And lo his golden sheaf — is but a song !

XXXV

Now appletrees at Alstead
With early fruit are hung,
And you may crush blueberries
Upon your eager tongue ;
And though my years are fifty,
I feel but twenty young.

Blow up, you winds of morning,
And kiss your vales and hills ;
Wherever you be roaming,
The cup of beauty fills
With what divine elixir
To dissipate our ills !

The blood's a sunny river
That laughs upon its way ;
The heart, it seems, is quaffing
Invisible Tokay ;
The soul, to unseen pipers,
Is but a dancing fay.

XXXVI

BRIDGES

Greater than any bridge of stone,
Across whatever waters thrown ;
Greater than any heaving bridge
Of ships across the ridge on ridge
Of roaring seas : yea, greater still
Is that strong bridge which from the will
Of patriot soul to patriot soul
Doth bear us to our shining goal —
The unseen bridge of Liberty,
Linking all hearts that would be free.

XXXVII

Along the starry Road of Dreams
A soul went flying fast,
When lo ! adown that ancient way
A swifter Spirit passed.

The first soul said : “ That Soul I love ;
She hastens home, to wake ;
But I must keep the Road of Dreams,
Or my poor heart will break.”

XXXVIII

I ride within a weary land,
 No moon, no star I see,
Yet here and there, on every hand,
 A magic minstrelsy
Makes bright the hour and sweet the place —
The thought of my beloved's face.

XXXIX

All upon a summer's day,
Wandering down a mountain way,
Love came singing like a bird ;
Barred against him, long I heard.

How my heart beat, how my blood
Ran within me like a flood !
Still behind my door I kept
Till he passed me — then I wept,

Wept big tears to know him gone,
Gone forever, singing on ;
Having shut to him the door,
Singing unto me no more.

Spring shall come again, they say,
Summer follow down the way —
Not for him who idly heard
Love come singing like a bird.

XL

A little love, a little flower
 My dear he gave to me;
They faded both within an hour —
 But one I still may see.

The red red rose, while it did live,
 Gave all to me it might;
But Love, who had so much to give,
 Gave but a hint of light.

The rose's heart is mine to keep;
 'Tis fragrant even in death;
Being, perchance, for those who weep,
 Pity, or pity's breath.

XLI

Dream-led unto a tomb,
 A Love, forlorn, I spied,
Within his hand a bloom
 That long ago had died.

“O Love, your flower is old;
 Take mine, this moment blown.”
But Love, with firmer hold,
 Still kept, and kissed, his own.

XLII

Tell you how my songs are born ?
With pleasure, love, I will :
You smiled at me one wintry morn —
And I am singing still !

XLIII

Come back to me at morning,
Come back beneath the moon,
Come back, in white December,
Or come, my dear, in June,
The heart within my bosom
With love shall brightly burn —
Like flame upon an altar,
If never thou return !

XLIV

Were she only kind as fair,
Happy, happy wight were I,
Dancing, dancing everywhere,
Like to zephyrs in the sky.

Were she only half so sweet,
Or to beauty were I blind,
These my plodding weary feet,
Just for joy, could race the wind !

WARWICK CHIMES

As when along the Avon's banks
 I roamed and lost the road to cares,
 Within my soul fair Warwick's chimes
 Still play their quaint old English airs ;
 For often now, when loud the roar
 Of mingled sound invades the street,
 Some note I hear that wafts me clear
 Of all save realms divinely sweet.

Again in Warwickshire, I muse
 In many a haunt that Shakespeare knew ;
 Among spring flowers, I quaff cool cups
 That brim with more than mortal dew ;
 With visions bright that beckon on,
 A youth, I walk as in a dream ;
 Hope's paladin, I feel akin
 To grove and sky, to field and stream.

With joy at heart, in Faeryland
 Down moonlit vales I wander free ;
 The spell of Arden, like the wand
 Of Prospero, is over me ;
 While golden clear such chimes I hear
 As never yet on earth were born —
 The chimes that play through yesterday,
 Through now, and through tomorrow morn !

XLVI

Singing a mirthful song,
Light-hearted as the May,
A Dream, forgotten long,
Came wandering home to-day.

“Welcome, O Dream,” I said,
“Right welcome to my door;
Returned as from the dead,
Depart my love no more.”

But, singing, singing, passed
That olden Dream from sight;
And where I heard it last—
I pitch my tent tonight!

XLVII

THE SECRET STAIR

From out the heart unto the brain
There leads a winding secret stair,
Down which the Soul, in mortal pain,
Oft goes to heal her of despair;
And having come unto her friend,
She slumbers in a chamber dark,
Until, refreshed, her sorrows end,
And high in heaven sings the lark.

XLVIII

Dream that I shall dream tomorrow,
Be thou sweet and fair,
One from whom the soul may borrow
Antidote for care,
One for whom the face of Sorrow
Fosters not despair.

Time has been a sullen master :
Fate has made her woof
Spell but shadow and disaster ;
Fortune stands aloof ;
Joy than Hope departed faster ;
Love has flown my roof.

Dream that I shall dream hereafter,
Charm my state of gloom ;
Swing from each forsaken rafter
Censers that perfume ;
Bring me Song and bring me Laughter,
Crowned with many a bloom.

Spread a feast, and summon Pleasure !
Summon Life to dine ;
Summon Joy to pour a measure
Full of starry wine ;
Summon Love to pile his treasure
Round me, Dream divine !

XLIX

THE BEACON

This little Grecian lamp
Against the dewy damp
And ebony of night
I set to be his light.
I pray that he behold
And come to me, and fold
Me close unto his breast,
So make me wholly blest.

If this, O Lamp, come true,
New oil shall gladden you ;
But if my love come not,
Burn out, and be forgot ;
For better 'tis to sleep,
And better 'tis to weep,
And better 'tis to pray
In darkness, than by day.

L

Reverse the glass, the hour that's flown
We nevermore can make our own ;
But this new hour — while runs the sand
Let Life, the dreamer, take Love's hand ;
So master Time, so capture bliss,
Bridging Death's chasm with a kiss.

LI

Of late you sang of Phyllis,
 You sing of me to-day ;
To-morrow, Amaryllis
 Perchance shall light your lay.
Your song is gay and fickle
 Your love the same, I fear ;
Shall I escape the sickle
 When other maids appear ?

I pray you, dear, remember,
 The music, not the name ;
Rechristen June December,
 Her heart were still aflame.
Below the rime and meter
 The source of singing lies —
Within no Eden sweeter
 Than Chloe's wondrous eyes !

Come let us dance a measure,
 While all the world is fair ;
For love's a joy to treasure,
 Whatever mask it wear.

LII

When I thy voice do hear,
Divinely sweet and clear,
My soul, enraptured, sings,
Expands its wintered wings
And tiptoe stands for flight;
And were it not that I
Find heaven within my sight,
Most surely it would fly!

LIII

Often have I heard it said,
They who never love are dead,
They who love immortal are:
Love is like unto a star.

This explains the world to me;
They who love are spirits free
In the gardens of the gods;
They who hate are slaves and clods.

Heaven and Hell the blue sky spans;
Ariels and Calibans —
Each his realm doth choose and own;
Love's the only password known.

LIV

INTERLUDE

Still upon the slopes of Hybla
Sing the nightingales and hum the bees;
Still the sunlight and the moonlight
Glint and glimmer on the Grecian seas.

Still the rose in Attic gardens
Blooms as fair as when Aspasia shone;
Still the violet scents the shadows
Round about the ruined Parthenon.

All is gone of ancient Glory;
Still is beauty everywhere at hand;
Up and out from its enchantment
Yet shall come new luster to the land.

Never yet was beauty wasted,
Never yet in vain awoke a flower:
Time demands a fallow season;
Glory sleeps within her magic bower.

LV

IN HOSPITAL

Let all the bright dreams go!
But wait, let two remain:
The hope that conquers woe,
The rest that follows pain.

LVI

So many keys unlock the mind
That thoughts are wont to roam;
Abroad what laughing nymphs we find
That are but nuns at home!

And yet sometimes the heart so pleads
To cloister every thought,
That for a time I still my reeds
And leave the world unsought.

But when within her gloomy cell
The soul has found repose,
Dreaming, with Nature she doth dwell,
And scents the morning rose!

LVII

When no longer he remembers
The dreams he loved of yore,
The dreamer's life is only embers
That glow, but blaze no more.
Down against his rooftree shaken,
What icy boughs affright!
By all his golden guests forsaken,
What mockery were light!

LVIII

If love, if beauty is a dream,
If life's a dream, my dear ;
If this fair world doth only seem
A bright and rolling sphere,
What need to mourn ? What need to fret ?
What need to shed a tear ?
Let mystics dream ; let us forget
Their dreams, for ours, my dear.

LIX

What have the years left us ?
What will they bring ?
Life — life's not bereft us :
Still we can sing.

See ! blue skies above us,
Green sod below ;
Friends laugh with and love us ;
Bright the days flow.

Time, drop shades around us ;
Death, call us hame ;
Say not that you found us
Sorry we came.

LX

If I might sing thee a song,
Out of my heart to thine,
Winter perchance were not so long,
Or yet were full o' shine.

If I might whisper a word,
The word that I would say,
My heart were surely a bird
Upon a budding spray.

LXI

How brightly flew the days,
How bonny was the weather,
When down the leafy ways
We roamed the world, together.

Our only tears were born
Of sudden mirth and laughter ;
If Time bestowed a thorn,
What roses blossomed after !

Those youthful days are flown,
The dreams we had are vanished,
But who can say we own
No joys for pleasure banished ?

How sweetly fly the days,
How golden is the weather,
As down the autumn ways
We tread the world together !

LXII

Ah, yes, again the dew
Shall sparkle on the grass ;
But shall I be with you
When that bright hour shall pass ?

To-morrow morn, perchance,
Shall be as fair as this ;
But shall I win your glance ?
And shall I feel your kiss ?

Our joys have golden wings,
And fast they fly away ;
To every moment clings
The ghost of yesterday.

LXIII

Pursuing Happiness, a sweeter maid
Than she I found — a little Grief in gray.
I stopped to comfort her, and she repaid
My love with love that shall not pass away.

Soon, soon, with roses crowned, came Happiness,
Looked in and smiled, and beckoned me to roam ;
But seeing Grief was in her bridal dress,
Wondered, came in — and makes with us her home.

LXIV

All the world's a weariness,
Only care and weariness ;
Hearts are turned to stone.

Psyche, Psyche, whither,
Whither art thou flown ?

Flown have I to Beauty,
Far away to Beauty ;
If it matter where,
Seek me in the woodlands,
By the streams, in woodlands ;
Love and I are there.

LXV

The days go by like laughing maids,
No sooner have we cried them hail
Than with farewells into the shades
Of night they vanish down the vale.

Ah, if we might but one detain,
And speak the love that in us lies ;
Alas, the thought, the hope is vain,
None backward looks, and none replies.

A little while the skies do blush,
A little while 'tis ours to see,
When lo ! there comes a purple hush,
A star, a tear, a memory.

LXVI

'Tis but a glance from thorn to flower,
'Tis but a breath from joy to tears;
We often live within an hour
A rounded life of many years.

The day that I was happiest
I also wept and sorrowed most:
For Love at morn I had for guest;
At eve, I only had his ghost.

LXVII

Thou art the flower that scents my way,
Thou art the light that makes my day,
Thou art the song within my heart;
Yea, all of these and more thou art.

Unto my soul thou art the wings,
Unto my lips the mountain springs
Of liberty, yea, more besides —
Thou art the hope that still abides!

LXVIII

Dreamless, I slept; awake, I heard
The clear song of a mating bird
That seemed to say, What dreams were thine
Through the long night? I'm telling mine.
Silent, I mused awhile, then said,
“O bird, I dream by day instead
Of night; yet, if my heart speaks true,
Thy heart most surely sings for two!”

LXIX

Ah, Psyche, once, how long ago,
The cup of joy was mine;
Alas, alas, I shall not know
Again that golden wine;
My head is white as mountain snow,
My heart an empty shrine.

The silken sails of happiness
Are torn beyond repair;
No more they feel the wind's caress,
The urge to islands fair;
The helm unto the wave is less
Than seaweed rocking there.

A few days more, and then the last
And bitter cup for me;
The time of earth adventure past,
O Psyche, what for thee?
To what far port shall wing thy mast?
Beyond what airy sea?

LXX

Look you, maids, and weep the while,
Love lies dead upon the grass.
See! about his lips a smile;
Stoop and kiss him ere you pass.

Here, behold his arrows lie,
There his little bow, unstrung;
Pity, pity he should die,
Honey-sweet and golden-young.

Sing for him, so full of grace;
Weep for him — he taught us how;
Lying here in death's embrace,
Love was never loved till now.

Silly, silly maids were they,
Grieving at his head and feet —
Up he sprang and ran away,
Golden-young and honey-sweet.

LXXI

A TWILIGHT FEAR

Now that the sun has departed,
Over the land,
Slyly, vapors reach out
Hand after ghostly hand.
For whom are they searching?
And will they take hence
My love, the wilding rose,
By the old stone fence?

LXXII

The fair day dies
And stars arise,
Upfollowed by the moon ;
Bright watch they keep
While flowers do sleep
Upon the breast of June

When goes away
Our golden day
Of life, and we lie dumb,
What light shall bless
Forgetfulness
Until the morning come ?

LXXIII

SOLITUDE

I dreamed I journeyed with the ghosts
Of Lethe's wide and poppied strands —
The unremembered unknown hosts
That once had lived in many lands.

Long, long I wandered friendless there,
Until I met a merry shade
That, smiling, bowed and spake me fair :
“Thyself am I; be not afraid.”

LXXIV

THANATOS

Dying upon a summer's day,
Redolent with rose,
I could sleep in the deep grave
With affluent repose;
But oh to die in winter
And lie in the cold sod,
I could not even feel
The warm hand of God!

LXXV

The sun that shines with splendor bright,
Kissing with ardent lips the flowers,
Impartial, fills the soul with light
And warms these wintered hearts of ours;
For well he knows
That man and rose
Have but a little time to live,
And he a boundless love to give.

The rain that falls like heavy tears,
Weighting to earth the tender bloom,
Impartial, floods our hearts with fears
And drives gay dreams unto the tomb;
Yea, dreams, like flowers,
Forsake their bowers,
The best and brightest soonest fade:
Life's now a glory, now a shade.

SLUMBER TRAIL

As I go wandering by,
The whippoorwill is playing
His flute among the pines,
While vapors white are straying
Below the star that shines
Within a purple sky.
The unseen river ripples
With music low and sweet,
While many a fairy tipples
The dew about my feet,
And winks a golden eye —
Or, 'tis just a firefly
That wanders here and there,
To see that every fair
Young flower is fast asleep
Within his greenwood keep.

I feel the hour's a casket
Wherein its jewels rare
Are mine, if I but ask it,
And show for them I care.
As June doth put a blossom
Into her shining hair,
I take them to my bosom
And happily I wear.
I hang them round my sorrows
Like carcanets of light;
And in their glories blended,
By spirits kind attended,

I climb the pathway splendid,
And hope to gain the height.

LXXVII

LIFE

Life's but the filling of a cup
To give unto the traveler Death ;
And if he never think to give
As much to us, he's but a clown.
Yes, I have hope, as drop by drop
My cup grows full, that for the draught
I give I shall receive — perchance
A starry welcome at his door !

LXXVIII

The fire is out within my heart,
Yet there, with folded wings,
Serene, forgetful to depart,
My spirit sits and sings.

One little candle is her light,
A dream that flickers low —
Enough to keep away the night
Until the time to go.

LXXIX

Ah, if thy heart were not so cold,
If spring might enter there,
Perchance from out the quickened mold
Would leap a violet fair.

And if that flower should wake and see
Twin sisters in thine eyes,
Wouldst thou rejoice, or only be
Distant as paradise?

LXXX

There was a lady young and tall,
And full of every grace;
Yea, she was lovlier far than all
Her sisters fair o' face.

A-riding through the morn she went,
Upon a summer's day,
And all who saw forgot content
And put their work away.

They sought her far, they sought her wide,
They saw her not again —
The most alluring Dream doth ride
But once the ways of men.

LXXXI

Rough wind's at the corner ;
 No coy nodding there,
For he is a scorner
 Of all that is fair.
So keep to your shelter,
 My sweet autumn rose,
Or soon, helter-skelter,
 Your last petal goes.

LXXXII

I have no way of knowing,
 I have no eyes to see
The spirits and the shadows
 That ward or hinder me.

But in my heart I feel them,
 And in my soul I hear
The murmur of their sorrow,
 The music of their cheer.

We meet with joys supernal,
 We meet imperial woes —
And now our lot is thistles,
 And now, my dear, the rose.

The wounds of many battles
 May leave us worn and sore ;
But oh, the balmful gardens
 Were not so sweet before !

LXXXIII

“Put aside the lyre
And cease to sing;
Cover up thy fire
Till it be spring!”

Put my lyre away?
When Death shall come—
Not till that dark day
Shall Song be dumb!

LXXXIV

Laughing, shining, the moments run on,
With more to follow when they are gone;
Whence they come and whither they go,
Only the gods and fairies know.

How sweet, idle here, to watch them pass,
Dancing and singing across the grass—
Did they not take, as they pass by,
Gleams of glory from Beauty’s eye:

Gleams of glory till glory is gone!
Laughing and singing and dancing on,
Leaving us dumb, and leaving us cold,
Gray as November, and old, so old.

TO MEMORY

I envy not, Mnemosyne,
The lonely task assigned to thee ;
For every pleasure in thy store,
Of sorrows hast thou not a score ?

Thy tablets, overwritten much,
Wrinkle, and crumble to the touch ;
Their legends fade to myth, or less —
Till thou thyself art nothingness.

And yet, like woodland nymphs, perchance
The graceful Thoughts that round thee dance
At times, reward thy sadder hours,
Dropping from their white hands white flowers —

Sweet flowers that, though they die from sight,
Sprinkle the shadows with a light
Akin to stars, and leave behind
Olympian fragrance in the mind.

LXXXVI

From blossom time to time of snow
Is but a pleasant road to go ;
Come, let us travel side by side,
Until the last blown bud has died.

From time of snow to blossom time
The way leads through a dismal clime ;
But if together, love, we fare
We shall not sigh for roses there.

LXXXVII

THE HARVESTER

I only reap the golden days,
The leaden I forget ;
Gleaning, I climb the mountain ways
At sunrise and sunset.

The granaries of the Soul I pile
So full of treasured light,
The blackest Hour shall see me smile
To find no room for night.

UNTIL THE MORNING BREAK

Getting along, getting along
Upon the sunset way;
Still there's time for a merry song,
Whatever earth may say.

Deeper, deeper the shadows grow
(Closer, O love, to me);
Colder, colder the great winds blow,
Up from the wintry sea.

No need to ask old Time for alms
(We who have had so much);
When Death shall come he'll find our palms
Warm to his icy touch.

And if we may, we'll sing to him
The sweetest song we know,
And out into the silence dim
Follow where he may go.

Follow where he may go, my own,
Whatever road he take,
Down the vast gorge of the Unknown —
Until the morning break.

LXXXIX

Summer, fading, take my heart,
 Take my heart with you away!
Where can I, when you depart,
 Glean one pleasure from the day?

Love you brought me; love must go
 Wheresoever you may lead;
Hearts of roses, under snow,
 Cannot weep, and cannot bleed!

XC

Along the road a maid came singing,
 What she sang — I hear it now;
Stopped in the grain the sickle swinging,
 Stayed in the furrow the plow.
Entranced we stood, and long we listened;
 Not before was life so fine,
Never the sun more brightly glistened,
 Not before was air such wine.

Along the road a maid went singing,
 Hidden soon by bush and bough;
Into the grain the blade went swinging,
 Into the soil went the plow.
Never in all my wide world roaming
 Song so sweet made glad the morn —
But one is born for love and homing,
 And one for neither is born.

XCII

Whence come those tears that brightly run

Like brooklets down thy cheek?

What fountains leap into the sun?

What ocean do they seek?

The tarn of sorrow cannot flood

A heart so young as thine;

The springs of joy are in thy blood!

I would such springs were mine.

Unto my desert they would give

The green it misses now;

Again, and yet again, should live

The blossom on the bough.

XCII

Cold is the sky, and gray;

Tears in the cloud.

Where is the sun today?

Hope's in her shroud.

Warm is the sky, and bright;

Birds on the wing;

Life, love, liberty, light —

Hear the world sing!

Singing, along the road there came
A very merry wight,
Upon his lips the rosy flame
Of old and new delight.

And lo! he met a sad-eyed friend,
And loud he laughed and long,
To think a life unto its end
Should lack the joy of song.

The other, sighing, turned away,
And muttered, under breath :
“Poor fool; upon his dying day
He’ll smile, and jest with Death.”

And I who saw this drama played,
Knew not which way to run —
To Jollity, within the shade,
Or Sorrow, in the sun.

XCIV

The wind is chill upon the wold,
The cricket sings no more,
While blown leaves huddle, dry and old,
About my door.

Alas! for song, for beauty, dead;
Alas! that life is brief —
But this no cricket ever said,
No last sere leaf.

The cricket chirps until it dies,
The leaves, until they pass,
Are gay; 'tis only man that sighs
"Alas, alas!"

XCV

I will not name thee fair
The while thou art so cold;
I will not worship where
No poppy warms the mold.

Forget thy somber ways,
Forget thy hand of snow —
That all my soul may praise,
That all my heart may glow!

THE FLEETS OF AUTUMN

High-piled with fair imagined sweets
Of Summer's lost renown,
Upon the stream, behold the fleets
Of Autumn leaves drift down.

More ships are here than once arose
To swell the Persian's joy;
More, and more glorious, than those
That sped to conquer Troy.

To unknown ports they wander far,
And none shall homeward veer;
For Summer's gone, and her bright star
No longer rules the year.

Pray, answer me, thou shallow main,
Pray, tell to me, O gale,
Was our young princess darkly slain
That all these ships might sail?

Or did some goddess intervene,
And spirit her away?
Will she return to be our queen,
Beyond this dismal day?

At least, O Fate, these fleets appeal
Unto the souls of men:
From out the wrecks of dreams the keel
Of hope is framed again!

TO MELANCHOLY

Dark maid, full often have I thought
 To make a little song to thee,
But never could my soul be brought
 To sing the face I may not see ;
For never yet I passed thy door
 But thou didst seem a mourner there,
Thy head bent low as thou didst pour
 Great tears behind thy shrouding hair.

And so I never stayed to ask
 The road, nor yet to ask for bread,
As thou, indifferent in thy mask,
 Moved not, nor word of welcome said.
Moreover, that innoxious thorn
 Which I had fostered in my breast
I hid beneath a rose of morn !
 Unfit was I to be thy guest.

And yet how often do I take
 The lonely way that leads to thee ;
How often, too, my heart doth ache
 Thy sorrow-haunted face to see ;
For still I long to touch my strings
 To melody so fine and sweet
That thou shalt give me of thy springs
 And of thy manna bid me eat.

THE OLD SINGER

I've sailed the sea of Rhyme
A goodly bit of time,
And touched at many a shore,
But I shall sail no more;
The hour has come to be
A sailor home from sea,
A dreamer by the fire,
A listener to the lyre
By other minstrels played,
Drowning the songs I made —
Until along the coast
I wander but a ghost,
A shoreward-wafted weed
That clutches at a reed,
Yet knows, at morn and night,
The lifting tides of light!

XCIX

Into the mold I drove my spade,
Humming an olden tune :
Full-blown roses — how fast they fade,
Their fragrance dies how soon !

An opening bud looked up and said :
“ Tomorrow you may see
The fairest rose that ever wed
Butterfly, moth or bee.”

I labored there another dawn ;
Scentless the rose and sere ;
The bee had come, the bee had gone,
No butterfly was near.

Full-blown roses — how fast they fade,
Their fragrance dies how soon !
Into the mold I drove my spade,
Humming an olden tune.

HAPPY VALLEY

I walked a winding footpath,
With beauty all a-thrill ;
On one side shone a river
On one side knelt a hill ;
Reflected in the water
Was flower and bush and tree,
And in his leafy palace
A thrush sang joyously.

How well do I remember
Each sight and sound and scent ;
But I have quite forgotten
Whither and why I went ;
And I've no recollection
What cares I tossed away,
Nor have the least remembrance
What dreams beguiled the day.

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